

A special meeting of the City Planning Board was held on August 25, 2010 in the City Council Chambers in the City Hall Annex at 7:00 PM.

Present at the meeting were Members Drypolcher, Dolcino, Foss, Gross, Hicks, Meyer and Shurtleff (City Council representative). Mr. Woodward, Ms. Hebert and Ms. Osgood of the City Planning Division were also present, as were Messrs. Roberge and Mack of the City Engineering Division.

At 7:01 PM a quorum was present, and the Chair called the meeting to order.

Minutes of August 11, 2010 Planning Board meeting

The Clerk noted that on page 12 of the minutes of the August 11, 2010 meeting, "Mr. Dolcino" should be changed to "Ms. Dolcino". He also pointed out that he had received an email from Craig Walker regarding his testimony reported on page 20. Mr. Walker asked that his testimony be corrected to read "the School District paid over \$1.9 million for those seven houses. The total assessed value of all of the buildings that will be demolished is over \$1,000,000.00. The total assessed value of all the subject properties is \$8,181,100.00"

Mr. Gross moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of August 11, 2010 as revised. Mr. Shurtleff seconded. Motion carried.

Further consideration pursuant to RSA 674:54 of the proposal by the Concord School District to construct three new elementary schools

The Chair explained that the Planning Board was meeting to deliberate on its comments to be submitted to the Concord School District relative to the proposals for which a public hearing was held on August 11, 2010. He reminded the Board that its actions were advisory only and these were not projects for which there would be an approval or denial.

The Clerk reported that the Planning Board had received a number of communications relative to the Concord School District proposals and the packets before the Board this evening include one further communication that had been recently received.

- **At 123 Portsmouth Street**, the District proposes to construct a new elementary school on the same site with, and as an extension of the **Broken Ground School**, together with an expansion of ancillary parking and playground facilities.

Mr. Gross moved to adopt the recommendations as noted in the Planning Division report regarding issues that should be addressed by the School District. Mr. Shurtleff seconded.

Ms. Meyer questioned the possibility of survival of existing vegetation during construction, particularly the plant material at the edges of the parking lot.

Mr. Woodward noted that there is a suggested condition relating to landscaping under the Kimball School comments that was intended to be provided for all three projects. The proposed condition was that the school landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants (rhododendrons, mountain laurel, yew, holly, etc.), given that the schools are being designed to serve a pre-K through 3rd grade population, and where possible, shrubs should be replaced with shade trees.

Ms. Meyer expressed concern that shade trees take the longest to mature so she emphasized the importance of including shade trees as soon as possible after construction to allow them time to mature.

Mr. Gross explained that, in listening to the presentations at the public hearing, he tried to consider what the Planning Board would require of a private developer. Most private developers do not want to spend money on landscaping, but the Planning Board requires them to provide landscaping because while it may not count on day one, it will count in later years. It should not make any difference that this is a public project. He hoped that whatever recommendations the Board provides to the School District, the District will understand that plantings are not something done only if there is any extra money in the budget. Landscaping needs to be thought of as an important part of the project. There has to be relief from the asphalt with plantings. There has to be an attitude change from what the Board heard from the District and its representatives at the public hearing, and that the District's aspirations are really more than what he heard at the hearing.

Ms. Meyer felt it was part of the integrity of the building to have landscaping and shade trees.

Ms. Foss felt the recommendation regarding impacts to the home at 47 South Curtisville Road was vague and weak. She would like to see a fence included in the plan between the school property and the abutting residences which would provide both a visual barrier for lights as well as a security barrier for children cutting through back yards. She felt a fence needed to be specified particularly for this house because it is so close to the large parking lot.

Mr. Shurtleff felt the recommendation relative to improvements to South Curtisville Road needed to specify whose financial responsibility the expanded road would be. Mr. Drypolcher responded that the Board could recommend that the School Board take it upon itself as part of the project, but the Planning Board does not have the leverage to require it. If the School District doesn't improve the road and it breaks down, it is likely the City will have to do something to maintain it to some level.

Mr. Shurtleff hated to see residents along the road inconvenienced by tractor trailers using the road to access the wood chip plant and eventually breaking up the pavement.

Mr. Woodward explained that he had been in communication with the City's water system consultant regarding water pressure and flow demand. There was a hydrant test

taken in the Fall of 2009 and the consultant had projected the water demand and what it would take to support the sprinkler system and the hydrants on the site. There are no definitive answers at this time, but he reported that matters affecting fire protection and sprinkler systems are life safety items. He also reported that, while government agencies do not need to comply with land use regulations, they are required to comply with life safety codes.

Ms. Foss moved to amend the comments to include the specific recommendation that they install and maintain a fence to provide a visual and security barrier to protect the landowner at 47 South Curtisville Road. Mr. Shurtleff seconded.

Ms. Foss also moved to add the recommendation that the school landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants (rhododendrons, mountain laurel, yew, holly, etc.), given that the schools are being designed to serve a pre-K through 3rd grade population, and where possible, shrubs should be replaced with shade trees.

Mr. Gross moved to add a sentence at the end of the recommendation regarding improvements to South Curtisville Road that the road be widened to 26 feet of pavement, with a seven-foot grass panel and a five-foot sidewalk on the northwest side of the street, as recommended by the City Engineer.

Ms. Foss suggested that the sidewalk needed to extend to the easternmost property line. Mr. Shurtleff agreed.

The following motion as amended carried:

That the Planning Board advise the City Council, City Administration and the Concord School Board that the following issues need to be addressed:

1. Improvements to South Curtisville Road are needed to support the proposed school expansion. The section of South Curtisville Road between the existing site driveway and the most easterly of the proposed new driveways, is both substandard in width and not in a condition to accept the additional site traffic. This section of street is an essential part of the one-way on-site circulation for the new school. The City Engineer has recommended that South Curtisville Road be widened to 26 feet of pavement, with a 7-foot grass panel and a 5-foot sidewalk on the northwest side of the street.
2. The Concord School District needs to provide water service redundancy to the school complex. The existing water service extends 780 feet from Portsmouth Street and is proposed to be further extended by another 680 feet. The District needs to demonstrate that suitable water supply and pressure is available to serve the domestic and fire protection requirements of the combined schools.
3. The proposed sidewalk needs to be extended to the easternmost property line to address pedestrian access from existing and future residences to the east on South Curtisville Road and Curtisville Road.

4. A contingency needs to be included in the budget to address impacts to the home at 47 South Curtisville Road resulting from the District's clearing for the expanded parking lot next to this home. An opaque fence needs to be installed and maintained in order to provide a visual and security barrier for the landowner at 47 South Curtisville Road.
 5. Additional landscaping should be added at the main project entrance to compensate for the clearing that has occurred at this location and to enhance the appearance of the main entrance to the school and the view from the residences to the southeast of the main driveway on South Curtisville Road. The school landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants (rhododendrons, mountain laurel, yew, holly, etc.), given that the school is being designed to serve a pre-K through 3rd grade population. Where possible, shrubs should be replaced with shade trees.
- At **152 South Street**, the District proposes to demolish the existing **Conant Elementary School** and construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities.

Mr. Gross moved that the Planning Board adopt the recommendations in the Planning Division's report. Mr. Shurtleff seconded.

Mr. Drypolcher suggested adding a specific solution to the recommendation relative to the new driveway on South Street.

Ms. Foss reported that she was still having trouble with the issue of circulation on the site in general, and specifically with all ingress off South Street and egress into the neighborhood. South Street is designed to handle a lot of traffic but the neighborhood streets are not. She was uncomfortable with all the school traffic going into the neighborhood. She suggested the School District strongly consider entering into the Rundlett Middle School driveway and exiting back out onto South Street.

Mr. Hicks responded there might be a concern about students walking in front of and between buses or parent vehicles. However, he shared the concern to keep traffic off neighborhood streets.

Members agreed to add a recommendation that the preferred method of traffic movement would be to limit traffic exiting these two schools from going into the neighborhood through a one-way loop.

Messrs. Gross and Shurtleff agreed to the amendments.

The following motion as amended carried:

That the Planning Board advise the City Council, City Administration and the Concord School Board that the following issues need to be addressed:

1. The loading area, dumpsters, and generator next to the driveway to Rundlett Middle School should be provided with an opaque wall or fence to screen the public view of this least attractive visual element of the new school.
 2. The new driveway on South Street needs to be reduced in width and designed to the satisfaction of the City Engineer to be more suitable for a one-way access drive. The driveway to serve the abutter at 164 South Street can be separated from the school driveway, allowing for the school driveway to be narrowed. A "T" turnaround can be provided for the abutter so that he does not have to back out of the driveway.
 3. The District needs to enhance the parking and driveway buffer along the south property line next to the homes on Conant Drive, by extending the proposed four (4) foot high fence and by providing additional evergreen landscaping in any gaps left in the fence.
 4. The school landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants (rhododendrons, mountain laurel, yew, holly, etc.), given that the school's population includes pre-K through 3rd grade. Where possible, shrubs should be replaced with shade trees.
 5. It would be preferable to restrict the traffic exiting from the two schools (Conant and Rundlett) through neighborhood via Conant Drive. A one way loop may accomplish this outcome so that traffic exits out onto South Street.
- At **17 North Spring Street**, the District proposes to demolish the existing **Kimball Elementary School** along with the District's administrative offices at 16 Rumford Street as well as seven adjacent homes, in order to construct a new elementary school on the same site, together with ancillary parking and playground facilities.

Mr. Gross moved that the Planning Board adopt the recommendations in the Planning Division's report. Ms. Foss seconded.

Mr. Gross then moved to amend the staff recommendations by adding in the introductory paragraph "if the District elects to proceed with the Kimball site". He felt all the recommendations were appropriate but he was not certain that he was ready to imply that the Planning Board agreed with the proposed location of the new school on this site. Ms. Foss seconded.

Mr. Gross believed it was not for the Planning Board to tell the School District what to do about education policy. It was, however, the Planning Board's responsibility to advise the District about what uses are consistent with the City's expressed land use policies. His comments were not intended to reflect negatively on the decisions the School District had made, but the fact remained that this was a situation of not just how the District will do this but whether it should.

He noted that one of the persons who spoke at the hearing and sent comments to the Board suggested looking at this with the City's land use policies in mind. He reported he had looked at this project in this way, considering such things as preserving workforce housing, respect for historically significant properties, as well as the land use goal of avoiding an increase of non-residential traffic into residential neighborhoods. He felt that this is probably not the right place to expand educational facilities. However, other Master Plan goals include to not encourage sprawl and to encourage growth only within the Urban Growth Boundary. Intensification of use in developed areas is part of the cost of avoiding sprawl. That was one of the specific problems he had with the suggestion that the Clinton Street site was a better choice.

Mr. Gross further explained that for many years Pleasant Street in the area of the school has been institutionally zoned which is a transition zone. That means not just residences are permitted on Pleasant Street. So that would say that the redevelopment of the Pleasant Street side of this lot would be consistent with zoning. The question now was what to do. He felt that the point was to have a central school.

He wondered about the reasonable prospect for redeveloping this site for residential uses. Residential redevelopment is hard, and for buildings that have to be extensively retrofitted, it is expensive.

Mr. Gross reflected on his 42 years of living in the neighborhood. The present use of that site is no gem. There are extensive impervious surfaces. The site as presently developed is not a fine example of the best way that property could be developed for educational purposes or anything else. It may be that, with a few improvements, the District's proposed land use plan is better than what is there now. He just did not know if there was another likely site. He asked the Clerk about his experience responding to the District's questions in its quest to find another site.

Mr. Woodward reported that he had met with School District representatives a number of times, provided transportation and land use maps, and reviewed a number of specific sites that were suggested. He had found wetlands, inferior roadway systems, a lack of utilities, and the presence of steep slopes on many of them. He had explained the development problems that they would have to resolve with each site. He provided contact information or assessor's information. In some cases, there was unwillingness on the part of the property owner to sell. He indicated it was a dialogue which occurred over the past two years.

Mr. Gross explained that he was terribly torn by this but, for the moment, unless someone can come up with an alternative and doable site that would fit with the District's consolidation plan, this looked like the only option. That said, he felt the Board needed to advise the District about how to make this the best possible situation and reduce the impacts on the neighborhood. The School District needed to remember that this remained a major installation in a neighborhood that the City had worked hard to preserve over the years. If they centralized, they would intensify, and if they intensified, there would be costs imposed on the surrounding residential neighborhoods. They needed to respect and not disregard the neighborhood in any

way. He did not want what he voted for to imply that this was the best site, but it may well be the best available site.

Ms. Meyer agreed with Mr. Gross. She felt the School District could do a much better job with their site plan. She was distressed that buildings were being torn down for parking. She also had a hard time with the interior circulation. She did not see why there was a road going through the site and onto Pleasant Street. Isolating the paved basketball court did not work functionally and it did not relate at all to the playground. It was a shame that so much of the site was being used for vehicles and the convenience of the staff. She felt that there could be a much more functional site plan for the students that are going to be using this school.

Ms. Foss would like to see the Board's recommendation include encouragement for reducing onsite parking and making some arrangements to use a municipal parking garage. She would also like to see the Board's input specifically reference the Master Plan components that this project will undermine. She felt it was important for the Board to be on record with respect to those issues.

Ms. Meyer noted that the driveway cutting from one parking lot to another should not be there at all. It made no sense to her. She hated to see so much space on such a small site taken up for parking and vehicles.

Mr. Woodward responded that the District had tried to internalize parking and traffic on site because they knew they had imposed on the neighborhood over the years and were trying to change that. The School District offices have had on street parking in the neighborhood for years. The parent pick up/drop off phenomenon has taken over to the point that they currently block off access to the property in the afternoon when school is letting out. That is an imposition on the neighborhood and vehicles passing through the neighborhood. That was partly the point of having pickup on site. The Planning Division's view was that the District needed to come up with a management technique for this such as staggered release or remote drop off. It is an urban site and needs to be treated differently from the other schools in the city.

Mr. Shurtleff embraced the comments made by Ms. Meyer. He felt it was a shame to see homes torn down for the parking lot. He understood the District's goal to keep traffic on site, and he was also concerned about emergency vehicles trying to get through during peak hours. He liked the idea of transporting employees from a remote parking area.

Ms. Dolcino echoed everyone's concern about parking. She also noted that, with the existing parking around the nearby commercial properties, there would be quite an expanse of pavement. She understood there was not a lot of money for landscaping but she felt the site would be very attractive with just a few shrubs. She felt strongly that they needed to spend more money on landscaping to make this project more appealing to the neighborhood.

Mr. Shurtleff felt that if they went through with this project as proposed they would

need to provide lighting for the dark parking lots and play areas to make them safer after dark.

With regard to the Architectural Design Review Committee's comments, Mr. Gross indicated he would like to see the proposed sign disappear. It was inconsistent with the building surrounded by a residential area. It may be intended to be inviting but he felt it was too much for the neighborhood.

Ms. Meyer suggested reducing pavement and increasing green space.

Mr. Drypolcher agreed with the concerns about site layout and suggested adding comments regarding site plan including that the use of the site for on site parking should be reduced, use of the site for school-connected recreation should be increased along with an associated increase in landscaping, the basketball court seems to be misplaced or in an inappropriate location, and vehicular circulation on the site should be reconsidered to reduce use of the site simply for traffic transit.

Mr. Drypolcher also suggested adding a reference to the ways in which this proposal falls short in complying with the Master Plan.

Motion on the amendment to add "if the District elects to proceed with the Kimball site" in the introductory statement carried.

Mr. Shurtleff indicated he would be voting in favor of this motion because he wanted the recommendations forwarded to the School District but that was not to be construed as an approval of this site.

The following motion as amended carried:

That the Planning Board advise the City Council, City Administration and the Concord School Board that the following issues need to be addressed if the District elects to proceed with the Kimball site:

1. The District needs to request from the City Council that parking restrictions be implemented along Pleasant Street on both sides of the proposed new driveway.
2. The District needs to develop a plan for addressing the parent pick-up and drop-off that recognizes and effectively deals with this demand in the mornings and afternoons, and have said plan in place well before the new school opens. Said plan needs to have contingencies and alternatives to address both safety issues and any on-street blockages due to queuing traffic.
3. The District should address the design concerns of the Architectural Design Review Committee in regard to the south or Pleasant Street façade of the proposed school. This is the entry façade and will be visible from Pleasant Street. The Committee indicated that the south façade was too plain and looked like a blank wall, that it needed to be more inviting and welcoming and more to scale

for the students, and that it needed to be better integrated with the North Spring Street façade.

4. An easement will be needed for the sidewalk along Rumford Street which is proposed to be relocated onto school property.
5. The school landscape plans should be revised to exclude the use of poisonous plants (rhododendrons, mountain laurel, yew, holly, etc.), given that the school is being designed to include a pre-K through 3rd grade population. Where possible shrubs should be replaced with shade trees. The row of 26-rhododendrons in the parking area on the south side of the Kimball School should be replaced with shade trees.
6. The Board recommended consideration of a reduction of the amount of parking on the site and an increase in the use of the site for school-related recreation and an associated increase in landscaping. The basketball court seems to be in an inappropriate location. Vehicular circulation on the site should be reconsidered to reduce use of the site simply for traffic transit. The use of public parking garages for staff parking should be explored.
7. The Board noted that while the site is located within the Urban Growth Boundary and as such, the intensive redevelopment of this site is consistent with the anti-sprawl land use policies espoused in the City's Master Plan, the specific redevelopment program is contrary to a number of Master Plan goals and policies including preserving existing residential buildings, protecting historically significant properties, coordinating land use and transportation so as not to overburden the transportation system, and enhancing the aesthetics of the community inclusive of architectural features, streetscapes, landscapes, and signage.

Continued review of the proposed new Subdivision Regulations focusing on Chapter 3, Application Requirements.

Mr. Woodward reviewed the proposed revisions relative to application requirements. He explained that the requirements had been reorganized with the intent that they be easier to understand. New sections had been added with special provisions for Condominium Subdivisions as well as for Comprehensive Development Plans.

Mr. Gross felt it would be important to seriously consider adding a provision to the requirements that would require, or at least permit, supplementary submittal electronically for record purposes and to try to reduce the amount of paper stored. He felt all the professionals dealing with the City were likely to be able to accommodate that requirement.

Mr. Woodward noted that the draft regulations contain requirements for submittal of as-built plans in GIS format, but that the City is not equipped to have application plans submitted electronically. Mr. Gross clarifies that he was referring to a pdf submittal of

plans such as the reductions which were sent to the Board in the agenda packets.

It was noted that in several sections, the draft regulations appeared to delegate authority to the Clerk to waive certain requirements. Mr. Woodward indicated he would review this with the City Solicitor as he did not believe that the Board could delegate their waiver granting authority.

In the introduction to Section 13.01, it indicates that the section does not apply to the Design Review phase; however, Section 14.02 under the Design Review phase, invokes Section 13.01. It was noted that Section 13.01 needs to be corrected to reflect this.

After completion of the discussion on Chapter 3, Mr. Woodward explained that the intent would be to now put all comments together in a draft document for use at a public workshop for the users of this document in order to receive their feedback, and then make any further amendments after that workshop. A public hearing on a final draft could likely be held sometime at the end of the calendar year or early next year, followed by adoption of the new regulations.

Mr. Gross noted there should be a comprehensive communications section somewhere in the Board's regulations. Mr. Woodward responded that communications facilities are covered in the Board's Site Plan Review Regulations and as Conditional Use Permits in the Zoning Ordinance. The City staff is working on including a section in the draft Site Plan Review Regulations with more specific requirements.

Information Items

The Clerk then reviewed the agenda items scheduled for the September 15th meeting of the Board. He asked for guidance relative to a request by Tropic Star's agent that they be allowed to address the Planning Board which had been received at the August 18, 2010 meeting relative to issues raised by the Board at the July 20th meeting, inasmuch as the hearing has been closed.

Board members suggested that the applicant be advised to put any new information and concerns in writing to be provided to the Planning Board prior to the meeting.

There was no further business to come before the Board and the meeting adjourned at 9:44 PM.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Douglas G. Woodward
Clerk

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